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PLEASE PASS TO NEA/I, PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: COUNTRY TEAM ASSESSMENT - M1A1 MAIN BATTLE TANKS  
FOR THE IRAQI ARMY

[¶1.](#) (U) This is an action request, please see paragraph 13.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) SUMMARY: The U.S Embassy Country Team has reviewed and concurs with the Letter of Request (LOR) from the Government of Iraq (GOI) for the equipping of four regiments of the Iraqi Army (IA) with an export version of the M1A1 main battle tank (MBT) via Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Each regiment will have 35 MBTs and the IA will retain an addition 20 MBTs for national reserve (total sale is 160 MBTs). These armored units are included in the Ministry of Defense (MOD) Force Modernization Plan which will transform Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) from a limited counter-insurgency force into a more robust self-defense force over the next decade. The GOI will use this equipment to provide for its own security and defend against the insurgent threat. The plan includes provisions for equipping, training, and basing and will have a significant positive impact on the improvement of the Iraqi Armed Forces. With the expansion of the ISF, these tanks will enhance the Iraqis' ability to identify and confront known threats, thereby reducing the requirement for direct Coalition Force (CF) engagement. End Summary.

#### Security Goals

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3.(SBU) This purchase supports the modernization and generation of four armored IA units or regiments with 35 tanks each, plus a national logistics reserve of 20 tanks. Additionally, since these armored units themselves are not all encompassing, they will require the assistance of motor transport regiments and third and fourth line maintenance facilities to move long distances and to fix, repair, or replace equipment. The four regiments will be assigned to existing Iraqi Army divisions to be identified at a later date. The Iraqi Armed Forces (ISF) are projected to integrate the acquisition of this equipment with trained personnel after 2009 in order to offset U.S. and Coalition Force (CF) requirements. The Embassy Country Team supports a full and immediate release of the required equipment, and the building of facilities and ranges; as well as any required training for officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers to establish these organizations and operate this equipment.

#### Justification

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[¶4.](#) (SBU) The generation and fielding of these units will enhance Iraq's development of a force capable of assuming the lead role in internal offensive and defensive missions, securing the nation of Iraq, ensuring the security of the Iraqi population, and countering the existing insurgency. Regarding the latter, the MBT's considerable armor protects against the small arms and light weapons most commonly available to the insurgent forces, including rocket propelled grenades. With this armored protection, MBTs help a combined

arms team to outmatch insurgents decisively. The MBT's main gun and assortment of machine guns provide shock effect and firepower for the combined arms team. MBTs and infantry are mutually supporting in the urban combat that has been typical of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq. In a recent example, MNF-I employed MBTs to protect construction crews building security walls in Sadr City from sniper and RPG threats.

#### CENTCOM Concurrence

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¶15. (SBU) The Combatant Commander,s (CENTCOM) assessment and concurrence will be provided separately.

#### Anticipated Reaction from Neighbors

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¶16. (SBU) The Country Team does not anticipate that the development of these new units will adversely affect the regional balance of power with neighboring nations or cause negative reactions from other nations. This is based, in part, by the current estimate of MBTs in the region, shown below:

Turkey - 4132  
Israel - 3800  
Iran - 1822  
Saudi Arabia - 915 (of which 315 M1A2 and 73 M1A1)  
Jordan - 835  
Kuwait - 218 (of which 218 M1A2)  
Iraq - 160 (after this proposed sale)

#### Technology Accountability and Responsibility

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¶17. (SBU) Iraq has demonstrated both the intent and ability to protect sensitive and classified military technology since working with U.S. and Coalition Forces. The Foreign Assistance Act, Section 505 agreement, signed by the GOI on 24 July 2004, demonstrates Iraq,s commitment to protect grant defense articles and technology similar to our standards. We will continue to monitor the GOI on their protection of sensitive U.S. Government (USG) technology in order to provide long-term security cooperation with Iraq. We will obtain all necessary formal agreements with the GOI before transferring any sensitive equipment or technology. We will also continue to carry out a robust Enhanced End-Use Monitoring (EEUM) program for equipping these armored units. The Country Team understands that the following technologies are classified or considered sensitive:

- Base Vehicle: M1A1 Abrams with Situational Awareness (SA) Package
- Exportable version 2nd Generation Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) Gunners Primary Sight and Commander's Integrated Thermal Viewer
- Non-Depleted Uranium Export Special Armor in sealed modules and serialized removable subassemblies
- Selected releasable Tank Urban Survivability Kit (TUSK) components
- Ammunition: 120mm APFSDS Tungsten and 120mm M830A1 HEAT

#### Iraq's Political Importance in the Region

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¶18. (SBU) A stable, democratically-elected Iraqi government, capable of protecting its people and sovereignty while remaining at peace with its neighbors is one of the USG,s highest priority foreign policy objectives. The establishment and implementation of these force modernization units will facilitate progress towards that goal by increasing the Iraqi Army's ability to provide security and other key military operations against anti-Iraqi forces, while significantly reducing the risk to itself and others.

#### Source of Financing and Economic Impact

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¶9. (SBU) This purchase will be financed by the GOI with Iraqi national funds. The cost is estimated at \$2.0 Billion dollars CY2009 funds (as rough order of magnitude). We do not envision that USG approval of this technology release will in any way adversely affect either Iraqi or USG programmed funding. There is no significant economic impact based upon our analysis processes in anticipation of these critical FMS cases.

Relevant Human Rights Considerations  
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¶10. (SBU) There are no human rights considerations that would preclude the release of this equipment to the Iraqi military.

End Use Monitoring  
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¶11. (SBU) Sensitive items identified and described in paragraph 7 are subject to end user monitoring as agreed upon between host nation and the multi-national coalition forces and alignment with the security assistance office policy and procedures guidance.

Country Team Assessment  
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¶12. (SBU) The Country Team recommends the United States Government approve the establishment of the four (4) force modernization units and field 160 M1A1 main battle tanks.

Action Request  
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¶13. (SBU) The Embassy Country Team requests the Department engage with the Deputy Secretary of the Army for Defense Export Cooperation and other relevant offices to approve the full and immediate release the creation and generation of the four (4) force modernization units authenticated and signed by the Iraqi Minister of Defense.  
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